

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 873

UNCLAS CARACAS 11764

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT VE

SUBJ: SENATOR'S DEATH NECESSITATES UNUSUAL SPECIAL ELECTION

1. ON NOV 3 SENATOR JUAN DOMINGUEZ CHACIN, AN INDEPENDENT ELECTED ON THE AD TICKET, COMMITTED SUICIDE. HIS DEATH LEFT THE STATE OF ANZOATEGUI WITH A VACANT SEAT IN THE SENATE, THE TWO AD SENATORS AND ONE OF THEIR ALTERNATES ELECTED IN 1973 ALL HAVING DIED. (AD'S SECOND ANZOATEGUI SEAT IS FILLED BY THE SURVIVING ALTERNATE; THE

STATE'S THIRD SEAT IS OCCUPIED BY MIGUEL OTERO SILVA, AN INDEPENDENT ELECTED ON THE MEP TICKET.)

2. DOMINGUEZ'S DEATH HAS CAUSED AN UNUSUAL SITUATION, SINCE UNDER VENEZUELAN ELECTORAL PRACTICE THERE ARE AT LEAST ONE AND OFTEN TWO ALTERNATES FOR EACH SENATOR, IN ORDER TO PREVENT A VACANCY FROM OCCURRING AT ANY TIME DURING THE FIVE-YEAR SENATORIAL TERM. THE VACANCY CREATED BY DOMINGUEZ'S DEATH NECESSITATES A SPECIAL ELECTION, AND THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME ELECTORAL COUNCIL, DR CARLOS DELGADO CAHPELLIN (CARACAS --197), HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL TAKE PLACE IN JUNE 1976, THAT THE ELECTORAL REGISTER USED IN THE 1973 NTIONAL ELECTION WILL BE USED, AND THAT THE SPECIAL ELECTION WILL COST ALMOST \$2 MILLION.

3. COMMENT. ANZOATEGUI IS AN ADECO STRONGHOLD, AND IN 1973, OF A TOTAL OF 212,507 VOTES CAST, AD WON 102,203; COPEI 41,999; AND UNCLASSIFIED

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NEP 17,883; THE REST BEING SCATTERED AMONG SEVEN OTHER PARTIES.

POLITICAL OBSERVERS REGARD THIS RARE BY-ELECTION AS SHAPING UP INTO A TEST OF THE POPULARITY OF PRESIDENT PEREZ AND HIS ADMINISTRATION, AND ARE SAYING THAT IF AD DOES NOT RETAIN A BIG PLURALITY THIS WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS A SERIOUS SEFEAT FOR THE PRESIDENT AND HIS PARTY. AD AND THE OTHER MAJOR PARTIES ARE EXPECTED TO CAMPAIGN VIGOROUSLY FOR THE SPECIAL ELECTION, WHICH WILL ATTRACT GREAT NATIONAL ATTENTION.

4. THE RATHER LONG DELAY BEFORE THE ELECTION WILL BE HELD IS DUE TO THE SUPREME ELECTORAL COUNCIL'S DESIRE VERY CAREFULLY TO DETERMINE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES, THE EXACT PROCEDURES UNDER WHICH THE ELECTION WILL BE HELD, AND ALSO TO ALLOW THE PARTIES TIME TO GO THROUGH THEIR RATHER LABORIOUS PROCESSES OF CHOOSING THEIR CANDIDATES, INCLUDING ALTERNATES. END COMMENT.  
SHLAUDEMAN

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